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ABSTRACT

Social-emotional competence (SEC) is considered a measure of an individual's total effectiveness in dealing with the environment. To verify empirically whether SEC depends on the intelligence and social maturity of young children, a study of 40 preschool children was undertaken in India. A standardized intelligence test was administered to the children; to assess SEC and social maturity, children were observed in school and during home activities. Based on test and observation results, children were categorized into groups of high and low intelligence and into groups of high and low social maturity. Scores for the groups were compared with respect to four aspects of SEC: (1) self-confidence; (2) autonomy-dependence; (3) quality of social interactions; and (4) coping techniques. Data indicated that children categorized in the high intelligence group scored significantly higher than children in the low intelligence group on all four aspects of SEC. Similarly, children categorized as high in social maturity scored significantly better than children categorized as low in social maturity on the four aspects of SEC. From these findings it was concluded that a child's level of intelligence and maturity contributes significantly to social and emotional competency. (BCY)

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Social Emotional Competence of Pre-School Children: Relationship to Intelligence and Maturity

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Competence is the ability to do well what is attempted. A competent person makes the things happen into his environment. Social competence is the effectiveness of a person in dealing with the environment (White 1971, Zigler 1972). It is productive and mutually satisfying interactions between a child, his peers and significant adults (O'Malley 1977). Besides other skills and abilities emotional expression forms an essential part of competent and effective functions (Messick, 1974, White 1960). The study of social-emotional competence of young children is very important in the sense that it is the foundation of their achievements, abilities and personality. Social-emotional competence builds the self-concept and self-esteem of a child. Baumrind (1977) observed that social-emotional competence largely depends on the social environment of the child. The contention of the present study is that the role of child's abilities in developing social-emotional competency cannot be underestimated. Though, as it is pointed out by Yussen and Santrock (1978) social-emotional competence may be different from general intelligence yet it might depend upon the intellectual level of the child. Intelligence helps the child to understand, to evaluate and to act effectively on his environment. Therefore, it might be expected that social-emotional competence and intelligence are closely related.

Apart from this social maturity too seems to be an important variable which should help in developing the

social-emotional competence of the child. Social maturity is a progressive capacity of a child for looking after himself and participating in the activities which leads towards independence (Doll 1965). The progressive social maturation makes the child independent. The ability or the skill of a child to be independent contributes in the development of social-emotional competence. The purpose of the present study was to verify empirically whether social-emotional competence depends on intelligence and social maturity of the young children.

Method

Sample

Data were collected from 40 young children attending the Laboratory Nursery School of Child Development Department, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. Average age of pre-schoolers was 3years, 2 months.

Instruments

The following instruments were used to colelct the relevant data :

1. Seguine Form Board (Arthur, 1947) test was used to measure the intelligence of children.

2. Vineland Social Maturity Scale (Doll, 1965) was used to measure the social maturity of children.

3. Santa Barbara Social-Emotional Competence Scale (Hendrick 1975) was used to measure social-emotional competence.

Data Collection

First Seguine Form Board Test of intelligence was administered to children individually. Data on social-emotional competence and social maturity of children were collected by the author by observing the behaviour of children when they were participating in various activities in school and at home. Mothers of children were also asked to explain the behaviour of children wherever the need arised.

Results and Discussion

The data were analysed with the help of t-test. First, on the basis of their performance on the Seguine Form Board Test of intelligence children were categorised into two groups, high intelligent group (HIG) and low intelligent group (LIG) using median as the cut off point. Thus formed high intelligent and low intelligent groups were compared on different aspects comprising social-emotional competence. The results are reported in Table 1. Similarly median value on social maturity scale was used to divide the children into high social maturity (HSMG) and low social maturity (LSMG) groups. These results are presented in Table 2.

Table 1

It is obvious from the t-ratios in Table 1 that HIG & LIG of preschool children differed significantly in self-confidence ($t = 2.698$, $p < 0.05$), autonomy-dependence ($t = 2.161$, $p < 0.05$), social competence ($t = 4.112$, $p < 0.05$), and coping techniques ($t = 3.425$, $p < 0.05$) as well as on the total score of social emotional competence scale ($t = 3.579$, $p < 0.05$).

Similarly children having high social maturity obtained significantly different scores (Table 2) than those having low social maturity on self confidence ($t = 4.480$, $p < 0.05$), autonomy and dependence ($t = 2.471$, $p < 0.05$), social competence ($t = 3.629$, $p < 0.05$), coping techniques ($t = 3.77$, $p < 0.05$) and on total score of social-emotional competence scale ($t = 6.294$, $p < 0.05$).

Results in Table 1 reveal that HIG scored more ($M = 10.00$) than LIG ($M = 8.30$) on self confidence. Thus the development of self confidence, child revealed in dealing with school strictness or interactions depended on their level of intelligence. It is well known that intelligence is one of the important cognitive variables which helps understand and evaluate the environment. HIG showed more autonomy ($M = 11.40$) as compared to LIG ($M = 10.25$). In fact HIG children were more effective like in making decisions themselves and didn't associate themselves only with one person in the nursery school. High level of intelligence also helped children in dealing with the social situations

(M = 11.42). LIG children scored less (M = 9.50) on this aspect of competency. More intelligent children could share teacher and other things with fellow children. They could show concern for others and were willing to bargain to attain goals. Further, good coping techniques were being used by high intelligent (M = 10.25) children than those of low intelligent (M = 7.15). While expressing emotions they had full control on their emotions and knew how and where to express their emotions. Mentally alert children had maintained friendship with other children in the class , could express anger in an approved way and didn't damage any property. Thus intelligence helped children in dealing with their environment effectively through coping techniques.

In overall even on total score of social-emotional competence test, children of high intelligence got higher score (M = 43.75) than those of less intelligence (M = 34.95). From the findings of this research it is obvious that social emotional competence of a child depends on his intelligence. High intelligence brings self-confidence, autonomy, social competence and better coping techniques.

Comparison on different aspects of social emotional competence of socially more mature group (SMMG) of children and less mature group (SLMG) are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Socially more matured children revealed more self confidence (M = 10.5) than less maturers (M = 8.00). Socially fast

maturers got more score on autonomy-dependence dimension (M = 11.50) of social emotional competence scale. Whereas slow maturers were displaying less autonomy (M - 10.20), they were, rather dependent on mother and other adults. They use to cling only to one person most of the times. Mature children were good in their social interactions (M = 11.30) with peers, parents, teachers and other adults than less mature ones (M = 9.30). They also used better coping techniques (M = 10.55) than socially less mature children (M = 7.85). The two groups of SMMG (M = 43.75) and SLMG (M = 34.95) children differed significantly from one another on total social-emotional competenc . The results of the present study showed that social maturity contributes significantly in the development of self-confidence, autonomy, social interactions and coping techniques. Thus social maturity in self help, self-direction, locomotion, occupation, communication etc. helps children mastering their world. The skills gained in these activities develop social-competence in young pre-school children. Social maturity does help developing the skills required for social emotional competence at every stage of development. In a way social-emotional competence and social maturity seems to be associated or interdependent.

To conclude ,findings of the present study supported the hypothesis to start with that child's level of intelligence and maturity of self contributes in the development of

his social-emotional competence. No one is denying the fact that external environment, which is not in the hands of small child, does play an important role in the development of his competencies but his own efforts and capabilities also play a major role. Thus child is active by nature and not passive.

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Table 1. Comparison of Different Aspects of Social-Emotional Competency of High Intelligent and Less Intelligent Pre-School Children

Sr. No.	Social-Emotional Competence Variable	Group	M	S.D.	N	t-ratio
1.	Self-confidence	HIG	10.00	2.051	20	2.698*
		LIG	8.30	1.838	20	
2.	Autonomy and Dependence	HIG	11.40	0.940	20	2.161*
		LIG	10.25	2.114	20	
3.	Social competence	HIG	11.42	0.882	20	4.112*
		LIG	9.50	1.820	20	
4.	Coping Techniques	HIG	10.25	2.653	20	3.425*
		LIG	7.15	2.924	20	
5.	Total score	HIG	43.25	4.278	20	3.579*
		LIG	36.85	6.523	20	

*Significant at 0.05 level.

HIG = High Intelligent Group
LIG = Low Intelligent Group

Table 2. Comparison of Social-Emotional Competency of Socially More Matured and Less Matured Pre-School Children

Sr. No.	Social Emotional Competence Variable	Group	M	S.D.	N	t-ratio
1.	Self-Confidence	SMMG	10.50	1.732	20	4.480*
		SLMG	8.00	1.716	20	
2.	Autonomy and Dependence	SMMG	11.50	0.945	20	2.471*
		SLMG	10.20	2.092	20	
3.	Social competence	SMMG	11.30	1.031	20	3.629*
		SLMG	9.30	2.178	20	
4.	Coping Techniques	SMMG	10.55	1.605	20	3.770*
		SLMG	7.85	2.680	20	
5.	Total score	SMMG	43.75	3.725	20	6.294*
		SLMG	34.95	5.642	20	

*Significant at 0.05 level.

SMMG = Socially More Matured Group
SLMG = Socially Less Matured Group